

16 December 1952

SOME NOTES ON A CONVERSATION

In regard to the Navy reservation on paragraph 16 (?) of NIE-78, the argument probably is: just as a balanced military force is a deterrent to aggression, so a balanced weakness of military force is an invitation to aggression. From the latter it might follow that if you were weak in defense against air attack but strong in some other department of military power, say, in naval forces, your weakness would not be a balanced weakness and your invitation to aggression the less persuasive.

The USSR will make war when it is ready. It will not be ready until it has remedied weaknesses in its naval forces and in its air offense capabilities. Remedying these weaknesses will be a matter of three or four or five years. In this period the US should feel free to conduct as aggressive a foreign policy as it desires. Its conducting an aggressive foreign policy would confront the USSR with the following dilemma: to sit back and lose substantial chunks of the Bloc, i.e., Communist China, or to initiate a war which it would inevitably lose. If it initiated war, the West could absorb the effects of its current stockpile of atomic bombs (and presumably absorb its stockpile as of any time within, say, the next two or three years), and retaliate with an air offensive of far greater weight and duration. In fact, after the initial exchange of attacks, Soviet air offensive capabilities would be negligible, if existent, and the US capabilities only slightly impaired. In these circumstances, the US could continue the attack with a comparatively small amount of effort and reduce overall Soviet capabilities to nil. This is the choice that the men in the Kremlin would have to face if they elected to kick off World War III in response to a US policy aimed at destroying the Chinese Communist regime.

In the above terms broadening the war in Korea to direct assault on the real enemy, e.g., Communist China, is a safe and desirable course of action. No one ever spoke truer words than MacArthur when he asserted that the entry of Chinese Communist "volunteers" into Korea in force changed the Korean war to a war between the US and Communist China. If the US did make an all-out air assault on Communist China, the USSR would strip SAF in the FE and put it at the disposition of the Chinese Communists. The long range aircraft of this force

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would not fly offensive missions such as against Alaska or the continental US which would carry the almost certainty of general war between the US and the USSR. The US would, however, have to give Japan the kind of defense which it endeavored to give the Philippines in World War II.

If the US embarked upon an aggressive policy with respect to the situation in Europe, it might anticipate the development of insurrections in some of the European satellite countries. For example, Czechoslovakia, seeing an aggressive and winning team at work in the West, might kick over the traces. Soviet reaction would probably be no different from that in the Yugoslav affair. The air offensive is not only ahead of air defense, but the gap between them will continue to widen in favor of the offensive. No defense, even "a realistic optimum defense", could expect to stop more than 20% of an attacking force. When the Soviet A and H bomb stockpile reaches three or four or five hundred bombs, and the USSR calculates that it can deliver 80% of this stockpile on target and does so, we have had it.

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REMARKS:		
<p><i>Substance of the line of argument put forth to Sr on 16 Dec by a highly placed & long time civilian employee of A/F Intelligence.</i></p>		
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